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No. 245.—Vol. 11.

JULY 1, 1863.

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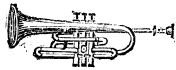
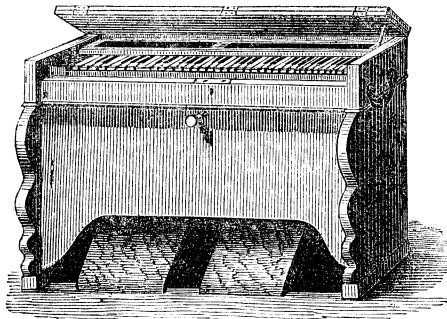
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PREFACE.

Upon various occasions, after I had quitted the profession of public lecturer upon dramatic and general poetic literature, applications came to me, from both friends and strangers, to print the courses I had formerly delivered upon "The Subordinate Characters in the Plays of Shakespeare."

I heeded, and not heeded, one after another, those gentle admonitions, until, some time since, an accomplished friend made me the same recommendation; and having had full experience of his judgement, also firmly believing in the sincerity of his appeal, I have revised and remodelled my manuscripts, for the purpose of presenting them to the reading public. It became evident, in the course of a careful scrutiny, that the form in which I had addressed my observations to a popular audience would be advantageously exchanged for one more suited to perusal; and also, that while in my lectures it was not necessary to treat of more than the subordinate characters in each play, far greater completeness and interest would be secured by including an examination of the more prominent characters.

I have therefore prepared the following Essays, with the hope that they will aid in directing attention to the ethical scope and design of the several dramas, and to the sustained harmony with which the Poet has delineated his characters throughout; accordingly, I may express my trust that the Essays will prove acceptable to all who are interested in the due appreciation of our great Moral Teacher.

It is a pleasure to me thus to give permanence to my hold upon the regard of my former hearers, and to believe that in another form will be recalled the disquisitions we formerly enjoyed together upon the greatest and most lovable genius that was ever vouchsafed to humanity,—a genius so lovable as well as so great, that, in pondering and repondering his productions for the chief portion of my life, I can sincerely say my admiration has ever increased in proportion with my study.

An addition to my pleasure—and I think it will likewise be one to my old hearers and new readers—is in the occasion afforded me of mentioning, that my affectionate study of Shakespeare has always been shared by one whom it were scant praise to pronounce the "better part" of me, and that to her feminine discrimination are owing many of the subtleties in character-development which we traced together, and which, in truth, form the "better part" of this volume.

In conclusion, I shake hands in spirit with all brother Shakespeare-lovers who do my book the courtesy of perusal, commending it to their kindest reception.

GENOA, June 1863.

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